

Best Fed **BEGINNINGS**

Improving Breastfeeding Support in U.S. Hospitals

90 hospitals sought for nationwide Learning Collaborative to improve practices to support breastfeeding and achieve Baby-Friendly designation

Background

The National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ), with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is leading a nationwide effort in close partnership with Baby-Friendly USA to help hospitals improve maternity care and increase the number of Baby-Friendly hospitals in the United States. Breastfeeding is one of the most effective preventive health measures for infants and mothers. For infants, breastfeeding decreases the incidence and severity of many infectious diseases, reduces infant mortality, and optimally supports neurodevelopment. Breastfeeding also decreases their risk of becoming obese later in childhood. Short- and long-term benefits to mothers who breastfeed include decreased risks of breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and cardiovascular disease.

The hospital experience strongly influences the mothers' infant feeding decisions. Baby-Friendly hospitals use the bundle of evidence-based care processes that most effectively support all mothers to be able to carry out their own infant feeding intentions and decisions. Although breastfeeding rates are higher and disparities in these rates are virtually eliminated in Baby-Friendly hospitals, only five percent of US births occur in these facilities.

The Project

Hospitals participating in this initiative will pursue Baby-Friendly designation. This verifies that a hospital has comprehensively implemented the American Academy of Pediatrics-endorsed *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*, as established in the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

The Work

Upon acceptance into the project, hospitals will begin a 22-month learning collaborative with other participating hospitals to make system-level changes in order to become Baby-Friendly. Participating hospitals will use quality improvement methods, following the Breakthrough Series approach pioneered by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). Teams will work with each other and with national breastfeeding and quality improvement experts through in-person Learning Sessions and subsequent Action Periods. Regional collaboratives will be established to help participating teams better connect to each other and to local resources. In addition, senior administrators from participating hospitals will participate in a concurrent Leadership Track, highlighting their critical role in enabling and supporting change, and reinforcing their connection to their hospitals' project teams.

The Schedule

Recruitment Activities	
Recruitment opens and website is live	April 2, 2012
Recruitment Informational Webinar	April 10, 2012, 4:00–5:00pm EST
Application Deadline	May 4, 2012, 5:00pm EST
Application Review Period	May 7, 2012 – June 8, 2012
All applicants notified of selection decisions	June 11, 2012
Key Project Events	
Learning Session 1	August - September 2012 *
Action Period 1	October 2012 – January 2013
Learning Session 2	February 2013 *
Action Period 2	March 2013 – August 2013
Learning Session 3	September 2013 *
Action Period 3	October 2013 – February 2014
Collaborative Close-out and Celebration	March 2014

* Specific dates for the learning sessions will be announced as they are confirmed.

How to Apply

This exciting project is for any hospital interested in working with national experts and leading hospitals to improve how they support mothers' infant feeding decisions. We are interested in helping hospitals achieve Baby-Friendly designation, and are especially interested in hearing from those that serve mothers and babies from minority and low-income populations. The steps you can take to apply to this program are:

- Visit our **recruitment website**. Starting **April 2**, everything you need to know to apply will be at: www.nichq.org/BFBrecruitment.
- Join our **recruitment informational webinar** on **April 10** from **4:00 to 5:00 pm EST**. Register for this webinar at: www.nichq.org/breastfeeding.
- **Submit your application by May 4 at 5:00 pm EST**. All applications must be submitted electronically through the recruitment website; be sure to carefully read all application instructions.

More Information

We welcome your interest and feedback. Visit www.nichq.org/breastfeeding for more information about this project.

